distance between the guiding rails during fastening of the guiding rails to the skin surface.

25. The system of claim **22**, wherein the tool carriage that carries the incision tool is a first tool carriage and the tool carriage that carries the closure tool is a second tool carriage.

26. The system of claim **25**, wherein the first tool carriage is dimensioned to urge the guiding rails to a predetermined lateral tensing rail space distance and thereby exert tensile force on the skin surface during creation of the incision.

27. The system of claim **25**, wherein the second tool carriage is dimensioned to urge the guiding rails to a predetermined lateral compressing rail space distance and thereby exert compression force on the skin surface during closure of the incision.

28. The system of claim **27**, wherein the compression force at least partially everts the edges of the incision together and the closure tool closes the incision with the edges held in the everted position.

29. The system of claim **22**, wherein the closure tool inserts a plurality of laterally spaced penetrating fasteners into the skin surface to close the incision.

30. The system of claim **22**, including a maintenance jig selectively engageable with the guiding rails, the maintenance jig being configured to place the guiding rails at a selected one of a predetermined lateral neutral rail space distance and a predetermined lateral compressing rail space distance relative to one another after the incision has been closed, and the maintenance jig maintaining that selected rail space distance between the guiding rails after conclusion of the surgical procedure for which access through the skin surface was provided by the incision at the access site.

31. A method of facilitating access through a patient skin surface, the skin surface being substantially planar and laterally oriented, the method comprising the steps of:

directly fastening a first guiding substrate to the skin surface, the first guiding substrate extending substantially parallel to the skin surface;

supporting a first guiding structure in a substantially fixed relationship to an access site of the skin surface with the first guiding substrate;

directly fastening a second guiding substrate to the skin surface, the second guiding substrate extending substantially parallel to the skin surface;

supporting a second guiding structure in a substantially fixed relationship to an access site of the skin surface with the second guiding substrate;

attaching a placement jig to the first and second guiding substrates for maintaining a substantially fixed relationship between the first and second guiding substrates at a first spacing distance;

attaching a maintenance jig to the first and second guiding substrates for maintaining a substantially fixed relationship between the first and second guiding substrates at a maintenance spacing distance, the maintenance spacing distance being smaller than the first spacing distance;

providing a tool carriage configured to accept at least a chosen one of a plurality of surgical tools for sequential interaction with the access site, the tool carriage including a following structure;

selectively engaging the following structure with the first guiding structure;

guiding the tool carriage along a predetermined action path when the following structure and first guiding structure are engaged and motive force is provided to the tool carriage;

when the surgical tool is an incising tool, guiding the tool carriage along the action path with the incising tool in penetrating contact with the access site of the skin surface to create a laterally elongate incision at the access site, using the incising tool, and thereby provide access below the skin surface;

using the placement jig before the surgical incision has been made at the access site;

using the maintenance jig after the surgical incision has been made at the access site; and

when the surgical tool is a closure tool, guiding the tool carriage along the action path to substantially close the incision at the access site, using the closure tool, and thereby prevent access through the incision below the skin surface.

32. The method of claim **31**, including the step of, when the first and second guiding substrates are fastened to the skin surface and the maintenance jig is attached to the first and second guiding substrates, urging the first and second guiding substrates with the maintenance jig into exerting a laterally compressive force on the skin surface adjacent the access site.

* * * * *